

Point of View

NORMAN HILL ISSUES LABOR DAY STATEMENT

By Norman Hill

This Labor Day is of critical importance to blacks and all working people, Norman Hill, President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, noted in a Labor Day message issued in New York.

Hill stressed that this Labor Day comes in a setting in which "our nation's highest office is occupied by a President whose policies will result in great hardship for the poor, working poor, and the elderly."

Hill urged blacks and all workers to actively participate in the Solidarity Day march in Washington, D.C., which has been called by the AFL-CIO for September 19th. The march, which will be the most significant public demonstration for social justice since the 1963 March on Washington, is being supported by a broad range of civil

rights, community, senior citizens, and religious groups. "In a very real sense," Hill noted, "this Labor Day is a prologue to the main event — the Solidarity Day March on September 19th."

Hill, a long time civil rights and trade union

Americans are asked to reflect upon the contributions of those who toil to produce the wealth of our great country. This year, however, Labor Day assumes even greater importance, for it is held in a time in which our nation's highest office is oc-

which overwhelmingly serve to benefit the rich and affluent. Now the Administration is beginning another frontal attack, this one aimed at the elderly and at all working people who seek some assurance that they will retire to a life of dignity and security.

In the face of these dangerous and radical policies, many of our political leaders appear to be paralyzed. Perhaps they were stunned by the swiftness with which the President achieved his legislative victories. Perhaps they were astonished by the defections on the part of many Southern Democrats, who joined with Republicans in creating a conservative majority in Congress. Whatever the reasons, our political leaders have failed us in many ways. One force in American life, however, has been up to the challenge. It is

the labor movement which has emerged as the most comprehensive, vocal, and responsible critic of the Reagan Administration's attempt to dismantle programs which benefit workers and the poor.

On Saturday, September 19th organized

1963 by A. Philip Randolph.

In 1963, the March on Washington succeeded in awakening America to the dangers of racial discrimination. This year, if many of us march on September 19th, we will send a message to our political leaders that the principles of social justice, racial equality, and economic progress remain important to all Americans.

In a very real sense this Labor Day is a prologue to the main event — the Solidarity Day March on September 19th. Labor Day is traditionally a time of relaxation and reflection. This year however, it must be a time of mobilization.

And in motivating ourselves to rekindle our activism this Labor Day, we can have no better guide than the example of the late A. Philip Randolph, one of our country's

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labor not only will be commemorating its past, it will be marching for its future and the future of all Americans. The AFL-CIO together with organizations representing minorities, senior citizens, and religious groups will put together the largest and most important march for social justice since the March on Washington called in

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activist, is a leading figure in the A. Philip Randolph Institute, an organization with 180 affiliates in 36 states whose membership numbers over 15,000.

The Full Text of Mr. Hill's statement follows:

LABOR DAY MESSAGE

This year's Labor Day is of critical importance to the black community and to all working people. Labor Day is traditionally a time when

occupied by a President whose policies will result in great hardship for the poor, the working poor, and the elderly.

The Reagan Administration has completed the first phase of its domestic legislative agenda and succeeded in dismantling a large number of needed and useful programs which have greatly benefited minorities and the poor. It has succeeded in coercing Congress into enacting the Reagan program of tax cuts

PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



In 1980, Fortune Magazine had an article in it which addressed the question as to what type of president Mr. Reagan would be. It spoke of the fact that Mr. Reagan would be a 'Chairman of the Board' type president with his cabinet members functioning as Vice Presidents in charge of various departments of the government. What Fortune Magazine speculated about in 1980 has come to pass in 1981.

After being on the job for six months, Mr. Reagan has decided that he needed thirty days off, and has left his 'Vice Presidents' to run the government. It seems that Mr. Reagan does not want to be bothered with any matter which can not be handled by the appropriate department. The military department should handle military matters and if there should be a dog fight over the Gulf of Sidra, don't wake Mr. Reagan until it's over. If a North Korean missile should burst near one of our high flying SR-70 planes, Mr. Reagan has no need to know that until he gets his formal briefing six hours later. But if the Air Traffic Controllers should go on strike, Mr. Reagan must be notified immediately, because he will have to fire them for breaking the law.

There is a song I have heard in my neighborhood for many years. It has a line that says, "Make me do right, make me do wrong; I'm your puppet." After hearing Ed Meese explain to the press why Mr. Reagan was not notified sooner

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To Be Equal

LEGAL AID FOR POOR IN DANGER

By Vernon Jordan

Legal aid for the poor is in a fight for its life. The Administration had targeted the Legal Services Corporation for destruction. LSC is the federally funded but locally run program that gives poor people access to representation in civil cases.

The Administration's plans were temporarily derailed when a Congressional sub-committee voted to reauthorize the program, but with new restrictions that will hamper its operations.



Vernon Jordan

Even so, LSC faces a hard fight for its life. Passing the first hurdle is no assurance that Congress will reauthorize the program, fund it at realistic levels, or even keep it from being so tied down with regulatory restrictions that it could not function as it has in the past.

The attempt to wipe LSC off the books is another example of trying to kill a federal program that has worked well. Legal Services has been universally regarded as a program that assists millions of poor people at minimal cost and with maximum effectiveness.

Legal Services made its way to the top of the hit list by bringing some widely publicized class action suits challenging some discriminatory laws and regulations.

But while such cases make headlines, they are relatively rare. Virtually all of the Corporation's work related to providing legal representation for individuals who would not otherwise be able to afford a lawyer, and therefore would be denied ac-

cess to their legal rights.

Like most programs that bear the "social" label, Legal Services is locally-oriented; it's not some monster agency in Washington remote from local concerns. The poverty lawyers work for private, nonprofit organizations in 330 communities, each governed by a board made up of local attorneys and citizens.

They serve thirty million people, whose poverty makes them eligible for the program's aid. Last

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year it handled 1.5 million legal matters, the vast majority of which were settled by negotiation, outside the courtroom.

Poverty lawyers spend most of their time on family law cases, such as child support actions, housing complaints, consumer fraud, and other important matters. When a poor person has an eviction notice, an irregularity in his pension payment, or is denied participation in an entitlement program, he can go to the poverty lawyers for help.

Poverty lawyers have helped workers unfairly dismissed from their jobs to get reinstated, ended landlord harassments and building code violations, challenged unfair and illegal denial of welfare benefits, and provided a wide range of other services ranging from simple divorce settlements to counselling neighborhood action groups.

These are not trivial matters; they are enormously important to the individuals affected by them. Without the poverty lawyers, the poor would have no legal recourse.

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